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*New Islamic Urbanism: The Architecture of Public and Private Space in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.* Stefan Maneval. London: UCL Press, 2019. Pp. 242.

Reviewed by Fawaz Abdul Salam, *McGill University*

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Over the last few decades, the spatial turn in the social sciences has succeeded in bringing more nuance into the study of the everyday Muslim lifeworld. The scholars leading this turn have been especially critical of earlier approaches to the study of Muslim societies, and this criticism has resulted in the problematization of essentialized and gendered notions of the “Islamic City” – notions which have characterized men as dominating the public sphere and women as being subjugated and marginalized to the private sphere by religious norms and patriarchal social orders. Stefan Maneval’s *New Islamic Urbanism: The Architecture of Public and Private Space in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia* is an important contribution to the ongoing examination of the entanglement between gendered public and private spaces in Jeddah during the twentieth century. Arguing against the normative Western assumption that gender segregation in Muslim societies produces distinctively gendered public and private spaces, this study asserts that varying notions of privacy in different cultural contexts produces public and private spaces that are intertwined, where the private space often plays a significant role in the constitution of active publics.

With the kingdom of Saudi Arabia currently undergoing sweeping social and cultural reform under the initiation of crown prince Muhammad bin Salman, Maneval’s work is particularly timely. Although Salman is a controversial figure due to his silencing and arresting of political dissidents, he has been applauded for abolishing Saudi Arabia’s strict gender segregation, a move which has encouraged women’s participation in public spaces. While acknowledging the impact of these recent changes, Maneval

does observe that gender segregation is still supported by a large section of the Saudi population, and, accordingly, draws attention to how the broader discourse of publicness and privacy and the idea of gender segregation is mediated by religious discourses, everyday social practices, and material culture. Although it is an undeniable fact that strict public morals and norms produce gender inequality and exclusion in the country, Maneval challenges the popular claim that men are the only ones who take advantage of it. Instead, by taking both men's and women's perspectives, the study illustrates how gender segregation and the changing notion of privacy limit the movements of both men and women within a particular architectural assemblage of the city.

Maneval uses various archival sources and fieldwork methods to reconstruct Jeddah's social history in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, exploring the interaction between "architecture, human bodies, [and] social practice and discourse" (13) in constituting both public and private spaces in the city. Theoretically, his study is informed by recent interventions in spatial studies offered by scholars such as Martina Low and Doreen Massey, both of whom stress the discursive formation of social spaces. This approach helps Maneval question the fixed notion of male public and female private spaces and points him toward the relational nature of how these spaces are constituted within a given cultural context. Theoretical insights are also drawn from Gilles Deleuze's theory of assemblage and Heike Delitz's studies in architectural sociology as a means of exploring the city's changing architectural assemblage and the forms of social practices and spaces that emerge out of it.

The first chapter traces how Jeddah – an important port city for the passage of Muslim *hajj* pilgrims to the holy city of Mecca – contributed to the urban development of the city in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapter two takes the reader on a visual tour of the old city with the help of photographs. Here, Maneval describes the physical topography and residential architecture of the old city, as well as the social spaces and the kind of publics that were constituted. By examining the architecture of residential houses, streets, and marketplaces and different social classes and ethnicities of the people who occupied them, Maneval argues that during the first half of the twentieth century, “the architecture in Jeddah did not provide fixed boundaries between public outdoor and private interior spaces but helped in the constitution of gendered publics both inside and outside the home” (41). For example, in traditional two-floored residences, men carried out business or provided accommodation for pilgrims on the ground floor, while the upper floor was restricted for family activities. Here, the female members of a joint family or friends from the neighborhood socialized, constituting an active public by organizing social gatherings to celebrate festivities, discuss family affairs, and other events. Similarly, during the *hajj* pilgrimage season, while many men worked in Mecca as traders and guides for pilgrims, women accessed the public spaces and organized public carnivals, revealing that gender segregation did not produce a permanent and distinctive space for men and women. Chapter two ends with two theoretical reflections: first, it is essential to look at how spaces are the product of social practices mediated by people and material culture; and second, to look at how gender segregation is informed by the notion of privacy and local concepts in Arab Islamic culture.

Chapter three demonstrates the profound changes in Jeddah's built environment enabled by the wealth brought by the discovery of oil. During the pre-oil era, residential architecture fulfilled different functions, such as the reception of guests, accommodation for pilgrims, and other social gatherings. However, new building materials and innovations in construction techniques during the oil era altered the materiality of public and private spaces, resulting in spatial differentiation and polarization. The new residential architecture that flourished during this period promoted a new concept of privacy, where home "became a more family-oriented, intimate, and female space" (107), and commercial, educational, and recreational activities were moved to external places. Additionally, an increase in the number of cars and the construction of wide motorways significantly changed the city's pre-oil era spatiality and sociality, reducing human interactions in public.

In the 1980s, many native urban planners, academics, and architects started to criticize the urbanism of the 1960s and 1970s for disregarding the traditional principles of neighborhood sociality as well as the Islamic notion of privacy. Navigating through the work of the various architects and town planners of this era, Maneval observes the formation of a new urban discourse in Jeddah called "New Islamic Urbanism." In chapter four, he argues that the emergence of this discourse has to be understood within the context of the broader discourse of Salafi revivalism that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, known as *al-sahwa al-Isamiyah*. Salafi scholars and reformers criticized the Saudi government for the increasing influence of Westernization, materialism, and individualism. Although the proponents of the *sahwa* movement and New Islamic Urbanism agreed upon the negative impacts of Westernization, the former advocated for reviving the Islamic teachings of the early

Muslim period while the latter advanced the concept of an Islamic city with reference to the old city of Jeddah.

Chapters five and six look at the impact of the discourse of New Islamic Urbanism on the everyday practices and material culture of Jeddah over the last few decades. While the residential architecture developed since the 1980s has increasingly focused on privacy protection as a means of supporting a pious lifestyle, this trend is also accepted by people who do not follow the conservative religious lifestyle advocated by Salafi reformers, as the new notion of privacy also stresses the importance of individual freedom and restricts outsiders' indulgence in personal spaces. Such a notion of privacy has also led to the flourishing of private cultural enclaves that host events that are usually not allowed in public spaces. These enclaves also often constitute a counter-public by providing shelter to marginalized groups such as political dissidents, those banned by religious groups, and LGBTQ+ people.

Two concepts that gained importance with the rise of New Islamic Urbanism discourse are the avoidance of *khalwa*, the presence of unrelated males and females in secluded spaces, and *ikhtilat*, the mixing of unrelated males and females in open spaces like cafés, restaurants, and shopping malls. While the majority tend to follow the segregation informed by these concepts, many others challenge them by the duplication of the private realm in public spaces. For example, a moving car with tinted windows provides a secluded space for challenging the dominant moral conduct in public. Additionally, the hosting of mixed art exhibitions, flash mobs, and other social events in shopping malls, cafés, and other public spaces contribute to the subtle expressions of counter publics, which resist the constraints put by religious police as well as the Saudi state.

While discussing the response to the discourse of New Islamic Urbanism, the study primarily focuses on Saudi citizens and Arabs from other countries in the Middle East. Little attention is paid to the experience of middle-class immigrants from South and Southeast Asia who comprise an important part of the population of Jeddah. The last two chapters would have been enriched by exploring the immigrants' perceived notions of privacy and publicness and how they are negotiated within the city's changing architectural assemblage.

That said, Maneval's study is helpful in understanding how urban spaces and spatial practices in Muslim societies are shaped by religious discourses and changing material culture. The book contributes to research on the transformation of public spheres and spaces in Muslim societies. It will also generate interest in both scholars and students examining the changing architectural assemblages of cities and everyday urban practices in the Middle East.